80-PAGE ALL-STAR SPECIAL

KERRANG!

£2.50
AUS: $7.50
9 770262 662179 51 >
KI1702
23.12.17

MARILYN MANSON

IN BED WITH THE ANTICHRISTMAS SUPERSTAR

25 NEW INTERVIEWS
A7X • SHIKARI
BIFFY • COREY • ATL
BVB • NECK DEEP
& LOADS MORE

READERS' POLL RESULTS

HUGE END OF YEAR QUIZ

Don't go expecting any presents this year, kids…

JINGLE HELL

CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GIVING, APPARENTLY. WHICH IS WHY, FOR THIS SPECIAL ISSUE, WE'VE PRESENTS GALORE IN THE FORM OF YEAR-END INTERVIEWS WITH **ROCK'S BIGGEST STARS**; A DECADENT **K! CHRISTMAS LUNCH**; **WRAPPING PAPER**, A MONSTER **QUIZ**, AND EVERYTHING ELSE YOU NEED TO GET YOU THROUGH THE FESTIVE SEASON. SHAME, THEN, THAT BEFORE ALL THAT, **MARILYN MANSON** IS HERE TO DO THE GRINCH'S BIDDING...

WORDS: PAUL BRANNIGAN
PHOTOS: PEROU
DIGITAL ART: STEVE HORSFALL

"Get into bed with me..."

The voice is low but insistent, the words part-dare, part-order. Marilyn Manson pats the mattress on which he's stretched out and beckons Kerrang! into his darkened room on the fifth floor of Manchester's Lowry Hotel. "It's perfectly safe," he croaks, shuffling his cadaverous, black-clad six-foot frame across to the right-hand side of the bed. "You can keep your shoes on."

In the half-light, Manson's own footwear – rather than the slash of red lipstick across his pale face, or the ornate silver rings on his fingers – is the first thing you notice. On his right leg, he is sporting a clunky-looking, grey protective boot, not a stylistic rockstar affectation, but rather a medical necessity, following an accident onstage at New York's Hammerstein Ballroom on September 30.

On that evening, the third date of the singer's Heaven Upside Down tour, Manson was crushed beneath a falling stage prop, two large iron pistols, which snapped his fibula in two places, causing what he recalls as "excruciating" pain. As a result, the 48-year-old singer had to have a metal plate and 10 titanium screws put into his fibula, and has undertaken his winter tour of Europe in a wheelchair. "This is the most 'metal' I've ever been, Kerrang!," he notes drolly, tapping his boot.

"It's a major injury, but a minor setback," he insists. "It wasn't a good accident to suffer, but I'm

refusing to let any negative energy hold me back. Hopefully I'll be back on my feet by Christmas. That'll be the best gift I could give myself this year. Then I can pop the little star on the top of my tree, which is two-foot high and spray-painted black."

"So, wait," he says, "you know that I was on the cover of Kerrang! for Christmas once before?"

Yes indeed, sir. It was Christmas 1998. You had one hand down your pants in Scarlet Page's cover photo…

"Right! Well, I just had a meet-and-greet with my fans two days ago and someone had that photo tattooed on their entire thigh. It was quite impressive. The only thing I regret about that cover is that my pubic hair wasn't as well-groomed as it might have been…"

And we're off. An audience with Marilyn Manson, it might not entirely surprise you to learn, is an unpredictable, occasionally bewildering and hugely entertaining experience. "Time makes no linear sense to me, so I'll just flash forward and flash back in conversation," he cautions. "I'm worse than the TV show Lost." When the singer last met with representatives of the UK media, at a private members' club in Berlin in September, he conducted his interviews with a naked girl in his bed, a mound of white powder on his table, and a replica gun in his hand. One broadsheet newspaper interviewer was asked if he was "a poop man, a scat guy", and had his testicles flicked mid-question, an unanticipated turn of events that generated more headlines than any soundbite that came out of Manson's mouth.

This evening, Manson – no-one calls him 'Marilyn' – is in a rather more mellow and reflective mood, though these things are relative. "If you write a bad article I'll probably come and stab you in the throat with a knife," he rasps at one point, poking Kerrang! a couple of times in the neck with a bony finger for emphasis. "Merry Christmas, motherfucker! Hahaha!"

Manson, it should be noted, isn't a huge fan of Christmas. Partially, he says, this is because his birthday falls on January 5, and consequently he would traditionally get a "combination gift" to encompass both celebrations. "I've always got fucked at Christmas," he sighs. "Not sexually, but y'know, cheated in terms of gifts. Some of your readers will relate.

"My favourite thing about Christmas as a kid was sneaking a peek inside the wrapped presents under the tree, and then re-sealing them," he recalls. "My mom was a terrible present-wrapper. I remember the first time I was disappointed in Christmas was when I sneaked a look at one of the LPs that she had purchased for me and it was Europe's The Final Countdown. Thanks, mom!

"My favourite-ever present as a kid was a drum set from my parents. Man, if you want to fuck someone over at Christmas, give their kid a drum set. They'll hate you forever. I've a photo somewhere of me in my kitchen as a kid, playing my drums, the happiest kid in the world. It was a nice upgrade from playing the triangle in school, which is the most uncool instrument. I'm still very fond of making drum beats, but I learned pretty early on that you look more handsome with a microphone in your hand."

Hugh and Barbara Warner didn't ever bother their only son with the pretence of Father Christmas. Manson swears he was okay with this.

"I remember hearing that song I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus, and I always thought that'd be a pretty awkward song to listen to if you believed in Santa Claus," he muses. "You've got this big, fat, bearded home-invader leaving who-knows-what under your tree, and then you see your mom making out with this guy, and you're not supposed to tell your dad. What's that about? And people say *I'm* fucked up…"

Is Marilyn Manson a thoughtful gift-giver himself, though? What could Kerrang! expect in our stocking this Christmas if we were counted among your close friends?

"I always paint my friends," he says. "I do portrait paintings for them. I used to be a terrible gift-giver, just buying expensive wines whether the person drank wine or not, but my art feels like a more personal gift, and they can see that it's heartfelt and comes with the best of intentions. And now that people actually buy my art I guess they could always sell those paintings if we stop being friends."

For all his playfulness today, there's an undercurrent of melancholy and pathos when Manson dryly notes, "Christmas becomes increasingly exciting for me because there's less family around each year…" With the death of his father Hugh in July, this Christmas will be Manson's first as an orphan, his mother having passed away in 2014. The singer posted a moving tribute to his father in July – "He taught me how to be a man, a fighter and a survivor," he wrote on Instagram. "He taught me how to shoot a gun. How to drive. How to lead. He will always be the best dad in the world" – and although today Manson's speaks of "soldiering on" following his loss, it's evident that he has yet to find the time to fully process his grief or mourn, as the conversation this evening frequently circles back around to the subject.

"The value of life takes on extra significance when your parents are gone," he notes soberly at one point. "My father died within 30 minutes of me saying 'I love you' to him, and I don't want to sound cold, but it made me realise that I don't have time to fuck around here.

"I'm sure that over Christmas I'll probably dwell on the fact that I'm the last in the bloodline, given

Oh God, Uncle Manson's been on the plonk again…

"I'LL BE SPENDING CHRISTMAS WITH MY CATS. THEY'RE ASSHOLES"

“PEOPLE HAVE MISTAKEN MY KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY FOR WEAKNESS...”

Door frames: forever winding Manson up

that I don't have any brothers and sisters. That doesn't mean – girls who're listening, he says, in parentheses, I'm writing this article for you now – that I want to start breeding this Christmas, but it's just me and my boys now."

Your boys?

"My cats. William 'Bright Boy' Manson, and Rusty Manson. They're a year old and they're assholes. They're Devon Rexes, short-haired British cats, so technically that's your fault. They're a cross-breed, and they get called 'monkeys in cat suits'. I know they're going to fuck up my Christmas tree. William will just look at me, swipe my drink onto the floor, then look at me again like, [nonchalantly] 'What?' They're really ornery, it's like having terrible children. Maybe I should get them drum kits…"

THE GOD OF RESOLUTIONS

MANSON ON WHY 2018 ISN'T GOING TO BRING SWEEPING CHANGES TO HIS LIFE – OR BEDROOM

"I never live up to my resolutions," says Manson, "but I just want to make 2018 better than 2017. This year provided proof that you can't control life and death, but by force of will you can make your life better. Mostly I just want to enjoy fucking doing my job. Not that I consider what I do as a job – I say it's a job in the same that a blowjob is a job, both are art rather than work… and you don't get unemployment cover for not doing them. But my resolution for 2018 is to continue to keep creating scenarios that involve both art and blowjobs."

When he reflects back upon his year, Marilyn Manson describes 2017 as "a great year… but with sobering moments." As a highlight, he identifies the positive reception October's Heaven Upside Down has received among his friends, "and strangers too." While his father's death and his onstage accident were obvious low points, they were not the only dark stains on the past 12 months of his life. Manson's former bandmate Daisy Berkowitz, aka Scott Putesky, passed away in October, and that same month the singer dismissed his long-time friend and bassist Twiggy Ramirez (Jeordie White) from his touring band following allegations of rape and sexual assault from Twiggy's ex-girlfriend Jessicka Addams, the former singer of Manson's 'sister band', Jack Off Jill.

"I did not divorce Twiggy as a friend or brother, because I still care about him greatly," he says, picking his words slowly and carefully. "But I can't say that my musical relationship with Twiggy has been good for several years. My relationship with [musical collaborator] Tyler Bates on The Pale Emperor made something open up in me and I didn't want to let negative energy back in my life.

"There were other people in my life that I thought were friends that I had to cut out this year, a lot of betrayals that surprised me, and I had to clean house and adopt a new attitude. People mistook my kindness and generosity for weakness. So I kinda adapted this attitude, like, 'If you fuck with me, there will be consequences…' I have issues with intimacy. That might sound weird given that we're lying in bed together, but y'know…"

One friend who Manson has kept close this year is Johnny Depp. The actor had starring roles in Manson's purposely NSFW videos for SAY10 and KILL4ME, appearing onstage with him at last week's SSE Arena, Wembley show, and there's genuine affection in Manson's voice when he speaks of their relationship. Not least, it transpires, because he views Johnny as a positive influence in his life.

"The first book that Johnny Depp ever gave me – and I say Johnny Depp because we've always had a pact to use our full names – was Jean Cocteau's Opium," Manson says. "It talks about the pleasure of being on drugs, but also cautions that you'll have all these ideas but you can't grasp them or benefit from them. That made a lot of sense to me. You can indulge in cocaine or absinthe or whatever and you get all these crazy ideas, but you don't end up doing anything about them, and that's what I was tired of doing in life. I was tired of having so many ideas and not completing them. So I had to eliminate worthless conversations, drugs that confuse me, and everything that is negative. I'm not sober – life should never be a straight line, because that's boring – but if you keep doing things that are fucking shit up, stop doing it."

Much of Manson's newfound positivity is rooted in his pride in Heaven Upside Down. He's effusive in his praise of Tyler Bates, his musical director, and clearly very fond of the 52-year-old musician, who had to sit out Manson's UK tour due to prior commitments with TV and movie work.

The two men met through their mutual involvement in the U.S. TV series Californication, part of which was shot in the 'Houdini House' mansion in Los Angeles, where Manson recorded 2000's masterful Holy Wood… album, and the singer sees their friendship as fated, one more example of the mysterious, unexplainable ways in which life is ordered amid chaos. Another close friend is Newcastle-born Sons Of Anarchy actor Charlie Hunnam, with whom Manson spent his past two Christmases. "He loves to cook things, and we love to allegedly smoke marijuana together in the holiday spirit of the yule log," he laughs.

And this Christmas?

"I haven't made any plans," Manson admits. "I just want to have a good one. Hopefully I'll spend it with someone that cares about me."

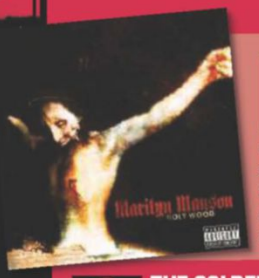
As relatable as he can be at unguarded moments like this, it's hard to imagine what it's truly like being Marilyn Manson, for whom life is so often performance art. He might refer to himself as "white trash from Ohio", but the randomness of his day-to-day life is highlighted at one point today when he reveals that he'll be having dinner in Manchester this evening with David Hasselhoff, without actually explaining why this is happening. The singer describes himself as being "a high-functioning autistic" – "I have an IQ of 170," he says. "I tried to drink it down to 150" – and he confesses to often feeling awkward in crowds ("Somewhat ironic given the career I've chosen"). At another point in our conversation he compares himself to the sociopathic Negan from The Walking Dead, "neither a hero or a villain".

"I've often been told by romantic partners that life isn't a TV show and it's not a movie," he admits. "I always try to explain that these things are written by people who are real and if I identify with someone I'm not trying to say that I *am* that person, or that I believe that our relationship is like this movie we're watching. But I can get obsessed with characters. Like, I got totally sucked into True Detective because of Matthew McConaughey's character, Rust, and his perception of life as being a flat circle. My cat Rusty is named after him. And with my art I try to make things that make people think in different ways, too. There is shit that I want to fuck up."

In conversation today it's striking that the 2017 model Manson appears more self-assured and grounded than ever, less prone to making provocative, controversy-courting statements for

DISPOSABLE TUNES?

MANSON SEPARATES THE GOLDEN FROM THE GROTESQUE IN HIS LIFETIME OF WORK...



1 HOLY WOOD (IN THE SHADOW OF THE VALLEY OF DEATH) (2000)

"I hate you for making me do this, but I'll rank these albums on an emotional scale," says Manson. "And this is the most important record, in my heart, maybe because it came straight after Columbine [the 1999 U.S. high school shooting, which sections of the media suggested Manson's music had inspired]. It's not my most personal or confessional record, but maybe in some ways it is because I was talking about all the things in my head."

2 THE GOLDEN AGE OF GROTESQUE (2003)

Manson's stylish, slick fifth album, partially inspired by burlesque, cabaret and vaudeville shows in 1920s Berlin. "This album is a snapshot of my favourite transition in life. It was while I was married and it was a very creative time for me. It was a time when I felt that I didn't have to define myself simply by music – I had my first art show around this time – but I felt like I could be truly me."

3 ANTICHRIST SUPERSTAR (1996)

Manson's revelatory breakthrough album, an elaborate rock opera. "People might think that this is the definitive Marilyn Manson record," he acknowledges. "It was a tough time making it, though. New Orleans is a dark, sinister place. I remember Jonathan Davis from Korn came to stay with me there to get sober... bad idea. Objectively I can see that it's an important album."

4 MECHANICAL ANIMALS (1998)

"I wrote this record when I went to Hollywood, and it was my introduction to the world of fame," Manson explains. "But I wrote about that fame *before* I was famous, so it was more like an omen, or a portent of what was to come. I really like the way that this record sounds, though I hated it at the time, and [producer] Michael Beinhorn was a bit of a prick."

5 EAT ME, DRINK ME (2007)

Manson admits that "this was written and recorded during a dark time in my life and it's my most personal record, lyrically. But in some ways it's my least favourite record because of the emotional attachment that I have to it. I was going through my divorce [from model/actress/burlesque icon Dita Von Teese] at the time, so it's hard record for me to revisit."

6 THE HIGH END OF LOW (2009)

"This was when I went insane, for real. I think I had a psychotic breakdown making this. Those pictures of the crazy writing on my walls? That wasn't for a photo shoot, that was how I lived at the time. I think it's great record – it was the last great collaboration between Twiggy [Ramirez] and I – but it came at a bad point in my life. Four Rusted Horses and Devour are great songs, though."

7 BORN VILLAIN (2012)

"This was a really painfully tortuous record to make, a very troublesome collaboration," Manson remembers of Born Villain's creation. "Jeordie [aka Twiggy] wasn't in a good place at the time, and although he played guitar on the record, I had to replay a lot of them: I learned how to play guitar just to do that, so one of my biggest memories of this is the blisters I had on my fucking fingers."

8 PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY (1994)

"This is where it all began. For the longest time I didn't think this album was as good as it could have been, but now when I listen to it, it sounds way better than I remember. We recorded part of this at the Sharon Tate house [10050 Cielo Drive in Los Angeles, where the Manson 'Family' murders were committed in 1969]. I won't confirm that I had sex there with an ex-girlfriend."

UNRANKED THE PALE EMPEROR (2015) & HEAVEN UPSIDE DOWN (2017)

"It's too soon to compare these two records to anything else," says Manson. "If I look at Eat Me..., High End Of Low and Born Villain, I was expressing myself emotionally, but I wasn't who I wanted to be. Working with Tyler Bates has been a rebirth, and these two might be my favourite records. These two are a comeback for what I felt I wasn't doing properly on those middle-period records."

the sake of it. Then again, with Donald Trump in The White House, re-writing history hour-by-hour with pronouncements that the most crazed Hollywood auteur would consider beyond the pale, what could Manson say in 2017 that could truly shock? Manson is still razor-sharp – during one rambling reference to Satanism, the phone in the room inexplicably rings out, and without missing a beat, the singer drawls, "That's the Devil checking in with me as he heard me call his name" – but he seems more considered with his provocations.

Despite Heaven Upside Down being trailered on the eve of the 2016 U.S. election with a video which appeared to reference Manson decapitating a symbolic Donald Trump-styled character – "People see what they want to see," he says, somewhat mischievously, as if this interpretation was entirely unanticipated – he's emphatic that the ascension of America's lamentable commander-in-chief had zero influence on the album.

"It had no influence whatsoever on the record," he insists. "I don't want to talk about politics; I want people to focus on something else, like, don't look at that, look at this. Actually my father had more influence on the album, because when I look back at the lyrics, I can see subconscious references. My father was going to be a Jesuit priest before he got sent to Vietnam, aged 17. He used to tell me that he never drank or took drugs in Vietnam, but later in life, when he was ill, he said, 'Of course I did, how could you not when you spend your days blowing up people?' He said 'Forget about PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], son, that's not the problem. How do you come back from a world where you're really good at doing your job, but your job is killing people? You're supposed to go back after that to a job as a grocery store manager?'

"You might think my vision of the world is dark, but just imagine how much darker and more fucked it looked through my father's eyes."

It's at this point in the conversation where light from the 'supermoon' above Manchester this evening begins to penetrate the drawn curtains in Manson's room. The singer switches off the table lamp by the bedside, accidentally smashing it in the process, so that the room is in complete darkness.

"Look," he says. "Do you see what I see?"

Staring across the room, from our vantage point on Manson's bed, an inverted cross of light is clearly visible on the carpet.

"What could be more appropriate for Kerrang!?" Manson laughs, reaching for his phone to snap a photo. "Let me take a picture of this. That's Heaven upside down right there."

Our hour with Manson is up. His wheelchair is rolled into the room. Dinner with Hasselhoff awaits. Manson gets to his feet somewhat tentatively, and stretches out his arms for a hug. Indeed as Kerrang! bids him farewell, he leans in for a second hug.

"Thanks for listening," he tells us. "And Merry Christmas."

Walking back towards the lift, Kerrang! notices for the first time a quote painted on the wall outside Manson's room.

"Manchester is the place where people do things," it reads, quoting What The Judge Saw by Judge Parry, published in 1912. "Don't talk about what you are going to do, do it."

As guidance for the road ahead, the newly-engaged, clear-headed and highly-motivated Marilyn Manson has probably had worse advice.

HEAVEN UPSIDE DOWN IS OUT NOW VIA CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. MARILYN MANSON PLAYS DOWNLOAD 2018 NEXT JUNE – SEE THE GIG GUIDE

Don't let anyone ever tell you you're too old for the school nativity

"MY FATHER'S DEATH MADE ME REALISE I DON'T HAVE TIME TO FUCK AROUND"